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MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Data Task Force Progress Report

1. Representatives of agencies participating in the Data Task Force met at CIA on 4 December 1967 to review progress since the initial meeting in October. The status of assigned research and analytical projects was reported on and discussed. Agreement was reached on the direction which further analysis should take, on the timing of coordination visits to CINCPAC and MACV, and on general procedures to tighten coordination on certain tasks. The results of the meeting are summarized below.

2. Retrospective Incident Line (DIA). The DIA representative reported that an initial pilot study is being developed to classify Viet Cong attacks by type and scale. Subsequent studies will be attempted on terror, sabotage, and possibly harassment incidents. When completed, these data files can be used to demonstrate more reliably trends in the nature and level of Viet Cong activity. This improved data series will also permit more meaningful analysis, in conjunction with other data series, of the relationships between the various trend lines, such as casualties, pacification trends, and the impact of friendly operations on over-all Viet Cong capabilities and unit effectiveness.

3. Research to date has uncovered a number of problems regarding criteria and methodology in reporting the data over the years, and in coding the inputs into the data base. It was agreed that coordination with MACV to refine reporting and coding procedures would facilitate the handling of incident data in the future. It was also agreed that it is essential that we obtain from MACV copies of their past reporting directives so that we can better evaluate apparent anomalies in the incident data series since mid-1966.

4. Progress in this key project, which is now gaining momentum, will contribute to progress in other projects which are dependent on this data.

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5. Hamlet Evaluation System Exploitation (DOD/SA Action). A study produced by DOD/SA on "Statistical Trends from the Hamlet Evaluation System" represents the results of this project thus far. This study led to the following conclusions:

a. The individual indicators can be analyzed separately to show meaningful trends, since the evaluators apparently are grading each indicator individually rather than mechanically attempting to arrive at some predetermined over-all grade for the hamlets;

b. The initial program formats which displayed only net changes do not adequately reflect the internal dynamics of pacification operations, since they tend to mask the large gross number of hamlets changing ratings -- both upward and downward; and

c. The HES data should provide a most useful base against which to compare other data series (VC incidents, friendly operations, opposing orders of battle, etc.) and analyze inter-relationships. CIA noted that its limited investigation of HES data showed that aggregations at higher levels (national and regional) also tended to mask dynamic movements internally at lower levels. Thus, while very little over-all movement was indicated when the data were displayed at corps or province levels, a disaggregation at district level showed dynamic movements in various districts. Analysis of the average scores for the nine security indicators at district from March through September showed significant improvement in 33 districts, and significant deterioration in 28 districts.

6. The DOD/SA study analyzed trends between March and September in eight of the 18 HES indicators. The analysis reflected slight over-all progress in reducing the capabilities of village guerrilla forces, although there was some regression evident in II Corps. With respect to VC main and local forces, there was an over-all slight regression indicated, with II Corps again reflecting the largest downward movement. No significant changes were reflected in the status of hamlet and village infrastructure components.

7. Mr. Thayer reported that new computer programs were being developed to permit analysis of total movements rather than net changes, and that further analysis of HES data using these programs should produce meaningful results. It was agreed that the effort to develop the optimum presentation

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of HES data should continue on a priority basis, and that closer coordination between the participating agencies on this matter was desirable.

8. Potential Indicators of Progress (DOD/SA). Several of the environmental factors had been explored to determine their suitability as progress indicators, but in each case difficulties either in acquiring basic data or in developing meaningful criteria were encountered. Data on such factors as provincial price indices and rice production are too scanty and diverse. Data on the status of lines of communication are very general, and the criteria not sufficiently precise for effective analysis at this time. DOD/SA stated further information was needed on MACV's route control system, including the precise criteria used, before a broader and potentially more meaningful measure can be developed. DIA reported its plan to analyze a number of data packages in an effort to evaluate the effectiveness of operations aimed at neutralizing enemy base areas.

9. Monthly List of Narrative Statements (CIA). This project has been temporarily held in abeyance because of extensive interagency and field actions that have otherwise been meeting the need for subjective accounts of progress in the war. The need for action on this project will be reviewed periodically, with a view to quarterly rather than monthly preparation.

10. RVNAF Effectiveness Measurement (JCS/SACSA). The Joint Staff has developed a proposed list of detailed data requirements to improve the measurement of RVNAF effectiveness. The list, which is keyed to computerization, requires comprehensive periodic information on all tactical units down to battalion, ship, or district level. Comments have already been received from data task force agencies and from MACV. The latter indicated that it is developing a new RVNAF evaluation system, which is scheduled to be implemented in January. Data from this new system may satisfy many of the requirements listed by the Joint Staff and assist DIA in its automation of RVNAF order of battle. Further action is dependent on coordination with CINCPAC and MACV which will reveal the extent to which MACV's new reporting system will meet Washington requirements as developed by the Joint Staff, DIA and DOD/SA. DIA reported that automating the RVNAF order of battle, which is currently in progress, should aid in meeting task force requirements.

11. Measuring Viet Cong Military Potential (CIA). This key project is partially dependent on the completion of certain related projects. As a minimum, automated data files on friendly and enemy order of battle now being developed by DIA, are a prerequisite. CIA reported on the status of a

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pilot project on Binh Thuan province. Data on Viet Cong incidents, friendly tactical operations, friendly air strikes, and the hamlet evaluation system have been converted to periodic computer plots and are being analyzed, using a videotape recording technique to demonstrate relationships over time. Other data, including friendly and enemy order of battle, and pacification plans, are to be added. Detailed friendly order of battle for this project -- not yet available in Washington -- has been requested from the field. This project is being developed essentially for visual presentation, using either videotape or bound overlay folios, with accompanying narrative. Development of this project is continuing, and may require several additional months.

12. DOD/SA reported on a parallel project which attempts to collate various data at the Corps level. A preliminary study of III Corps was published in its November publication. This study analyzed opposing force strengths, military operations, hamlet evaluation system results, and election data, presented in tabular form. Detailed comments from task force participants were solicited to facilitate further work on this project.

13. Saigon Data Files (CIA). A copy of MACV's Combined Document Exploitation Center index files had been requested and its receipt was expected momentarily. Arrangements are also in train to acquire selected Combined Intelligence Center reference files, and to obtain CORDS monthly province reports and copies of the 1967 provincial pacification plans. DIA reported that it was now able to service requests for copies of any MACV Intelligence Report since September 1966.

14. Balanced Set of Indicators (CIA). This project is contingent on further development of all related research projects referred to previously. The Joint Staff noted that both CINCPAC and MACV have evinced considerable interest in the over-all scope of the Data Task Force mission, and apparently are reviewing current reporting and evaluating procedures in a common search for improved measures of progress.

15. Briefing of CINCPAC and COMUSMACV. The Joint Staff representative suggested that the timing for the projected field coordination visits to CINCPAC and COMUSMACV be changed from mid-December to mid-January. It was agreed that January would be more opportune from the standpoint of the forthcoming holiday truces, as well as allowing further development of our own research projects.

16. Management and Coordination Arrangements. It was agreed that closer collaboration among the agencies involved in research projects of

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mutual interest was required to accelerate progress. Most participants reported difficulties in allocating requisite resources to Data Task Force responsibilities because of the press of other high priority tasks related to the Vietnam problems.

17. Recommendations. The participants recommend that:

a. All components press ahead with their research and developmental projects, maintaining close liaison and coordination with other components and reporting results as available.

b. That the liaison visits to CINCPAC and COMUSMACV be re-scheduled for mid-January.

c. The participants meet again before mid-January to review progress on the various projects and coordinate preparations for the projected field visits.

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